

Minnesota Law Enforcement Coalition

Representing these Organizations:

Minnesota County Attorneys Association
Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association

Minnesota Sheriffs Association
Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association

May 9, 2008

To: Representative Tom Huntley and Senator Steve Murphy

From: William Gillespie, Executive Director of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association;
John Kingrey, Executive Director of the Minnesota County Attorneys Association
Harlan Johnson, Executive Director, Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association; and
Jim Franklin, Executive Director, Minnesota Sheriffs Association

Re: H.F. 655/S.F. 345 (Authorizing Medical Use Of Marijuana)

Dear Representative Huntley and Senator Murphy:

We believe it is critically important to call your attention to inappropriate tactics used by advocates for H.F. 655/S.F.345 in seeking to secure the passage of this legislation. Specifically, representatives of the Marijuana Policy Project (MPP) have crossed the line of common decency. Recently these advocates have posted on their website and distributed documents and electronic communications that explicitly portray law enforcement officials who oppose the legislation as liars. Disagreement and debate on the important issues surrounding this legislation is one thing. However, these most recent tactics constitute an unwarranted, malicious and inflammatory attack, not only upon the personal integrity of each of us, but by implication upon the thousands of criminal justice professionals that we represent.

Representatives of MPP have also taken similar inappropriate actions by explicitly targeting a single opponent of this legislation (Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom) with personal attacks based upon his opposition to this legislative proposal. MPP representatives have been orchestrating mass calls to citizens wrongly asserting that Jim Backstrom has been providing false and misleading information to the Minnesota Legislature regarding the medical use of marijuana, and directly connecting these citizens to his office by phone through a 1-800 number or urging them to email him to express their displeasure with his position. Such tactics need to stop.

Over the course of the last year we have appreciated your willingness as authors of this legislation to listen to the many concerns of law enforcement. While we respect your position on this issue, we also hope you similarly respect ours. We will continue to advocate against the medical use of marijuana, just as we expect you will argue for the passage of this legislation. It is our hope that this can be done in a thoughtful and respectful manner without the need for malicious, personal and unwarranted attacks. We pledge our cooperation in this effort and hope you will do the same.

We would specifically request you to do what you can to bring the tone and tactics of the advocacy of MPP representatives to a respectful level. Thank you for your consideration.

cc: Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher
Majority Leader Larry Pogemiller